

Hospice of Marion Hospice House Visitation Policy

I. PURPOSE:

To ensure the patient's right to maintain in-person communication or visitation with the person(s) of their choice while at the Inpatient Unit (IPU).

II. STATEMENT:

Hospice of Marion County (HMC) staff will ensure the patients right to in-person communication or visitation with the person(s) of their choice is maintained while they are at the Inpatient Unit.

III. PROCEDURE:

1. HMC supports the rights of patients to choose with whom they want to visit, when they want visitation to occur, and for how long they want the visit to last.
2. Visiting hours are typically limited only by the patient or legal representative's personal preferences. Hospice of Marion County does not typically impose time limitations or restrictions on a patient's ability to maintain in-person visitation.
3. However, visitation limitations may be mandated in response to naturally occurring disasters, state of emergency or changing regulatory requirements.
4. Florida Legislature 2022: **No Patient Left Alone Act** provides for a patient designated Essential or Compassionate Caregiver who will be able to provide in-person visitation to the patient during mandated visitation limitations:
 - a. Essential Caregiver – An individual who provides health care services or assistance with activities of daily living to a patient in a hospice Inpatient Unit. Assistance can include but is not limited to feeding the patient or sitting with a patient at high risk for falling.
 - b. Compassionate Caregiver – An individual who assists the patient with coping at end of life, during a difficult transition, a loss, or major upset.
5. Patients may designate a family member, friend, guardian, or other individual as their essential or compassionate caregiver.
6. During timeframes of mandated visitation limitations: patient designated caregivers will retain the ability to visit in-person for at least 2 hours daily in their role as essential or compassionate caregivers regardless of mandated visitation limitations which may be in place. Visitation time allotted as an essential or compassionate caregiver will not be subtracted from any emergent time limitations in place to visitation policies.

7. Space is provided for patients to receive visitors in comfort and privacy. Hospice of Marion County has no restrictions governing consensual physical contact between the patient and the visitor.

a. In instances where there is a risk of cross transmission of infectious diseases, education about transmission-based Isolation Precautions will be provided to the visitor. **(See policy A-IDT-0513 – Patient/Resident/Caregiver/Visitor Infection Control Education)**

b. All visitors to the IPUs will be provided with the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) according to the type of transmission-based infection control precaution(s) being followed or procedures being performed (e.g. Standard, Droplet, Contact or Airborne). **(See policy A-IDT-0513 – Patient/Resident/Caregiver/Visitor Infection Control Education)**

8. Visitor screening: a. Visitors to a Hospice Inpatient Unit may be required to screen for COVID-19 or other emerging pandemic outbreaks of interest as mandated by regulation or Public Health recommendations. **(A-HR 910: COVID-19 Plan)**

b. Visitors may be provided a questionnaire upon entry regarding any signs, symptoms or recent exposure to COVID-19 or other emerging pandemic of interest. **(PC-Temp7 COVID-19 Screening Tool)**

c. Visitors who are ill or have had a positive exposure to a communicable or infectious disease such as influenza, COVID-19, etc., are asked to stay home to protect their loved ones, family, other patients, and staff. In-person visitation may still occur even if the visitor has had an exposure, a confirmed positive or is currently ill.

d. Visitors who are ill or have had an exposure to a communicable or infectious illnesses such as influenza, COVID-19, etc., must notify staff prior to entering the building. These visitors will be provided PPE outside of the building and may be asked to enter through an alternative entryway to minimize risk of exposure to others in the facility.

9. Rules pertaining to visitors and visiting hours are explained to the patient and/or the legal representative during the review and signing of the Inpatient Unit Information and Guidelines form H00194

10. Individual visitors who fail to follow the Inpatient Unit visitation policies and procedures may result in the suspension of that specific visitor's ability to have in-person visits. a. Violation of the IPU visitation policies and procedures may result in the specific visitor being suspended from in-person visitation.

b. Staff reserves the right to notify law enforcement of any threatening behavior, verbal threats, or acts of violence within the facility. Individuals engaging in these behaviors or activities will be asked to leave immediately and their ability to engage in in-person visitation will be suspended at that time.

c. The Interdisciplinary team will review the seriousness of the policy and procedure violation. Dependent upon their outcome, in-person visitation may be reinstated after meeting with the specific visitor to discuss the violation, review the policies and any specific visitation limitations put in place to address the concern. Visitation limitations may include, but not be limited to, accompanied visits, or scheduled visits.

d. Dependent upon the severity of the violation or repeated violation(s), Hospice of Marion County retains the right to permanently suspend a specific visitor's right to in-person visitation.

11. In the event that a visitor needs to file a complaint, make a suggestion, or report a safety concern, HMC asks that visitors discuss their concerns with a staff member who can immediately resolve the issue, ask to speak with the Clinical Manager of the facility, or contact the Compliance Officer at (352) 873-7442.

Hospice of Marion County is available 24/7 to answer your questions and concerns: (352) 873-7415.

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